

ganda was beginning to take practical form. Accordingly, all the Eepublican leaders hailed what I said because it came from a radical republican, whose utterances they could applaud and hold up as an excuse for strong action on their part, without its being possible for their foes to taunt them with being royalists and reactionaries in disguise.

Besides various formal functions such as dinner and receptions by the municipal government and by the Institute (of which I had been made a member and where, by the way, I genuinely enjoyed myself), I was also given two or three private breakfasts and dinners at which I met Briand, and various other members of the Government and the Opposition, in intimate and informal fashion. These I especially liked. Neither the President nor the ex-President was interesting; they were good honest respectable figure-heads ; but the members of the various ministries were thoroughly competent men, of much ability. It shows my own complacent Anglo-Saxon ignorance that I had hitherto rather looked down upon French public men, and have thought of them as people of marked levity. When I met them I found that they had just as solid characters as English and American public men, although with the attractiveness which to my mind makes the able and cultivated Frenchman really unique. I speedily realized that it was not they who were guilty of levity, it was the French nation, or rather the combination of the French national character with the English parliamentary system; a

system admirable for England, taking into account the English national character, the customs and ways of looking at things inherited generation after generation by both the English people and their public men, and especially the fact that there are in England two parties; but a system which has not worked well in a government by groups, where the people do not mind changing their leaders continually, and are so afraid of themselves that, unlike the English and Americans, they do not dare trust any one man with a temporary exercise of large power for fear they will be weak enough to let him assume it permanently.